

REMARKS

This Application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action mailed February 20, 2002. Applicant appreciates the Examiner's consideration of the Application. To advance this Application expeditiously to issuance, and to further clarify, more particularly point out, and more distinctly claim various inventive concepts already present in Applicant's claims, Claims 1-28 have been amended and new Claims 29-44 have been added. Certain of these changes do not narrow the claims and were not made in relation to patentability. None of these changes are considered necessary for patentability. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and full allowance of all pending claims.

Drawings

Formal drawings are submitted herewith. Acceptance of the drawings is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Independent Claims 1, 9, and 19 have been amended to incorporate certain limitations previously present in dependent Claims 3, 12, and 22, respectively, which the Examiner acknowledged would be allowable. The combination of limitations recited in independent Claims 1, 9, and 19, as amended, are not disclosed, taught, or suggested in the prior art of record. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn.

Applicant's Claims are Allowable

The Examiner rejects Claims 1, 9-11, and 19-21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,812,981 to Noguchi ("*Noguchi*") in view of U.S. Patent 6,324,581 to Xu ("*Xu*").

As described above, Claims 1, 9, and 19 have been amended to incorporate certain limitations previously present in dependent Claims 3, 12, and 22, respectively, which the Examiner acknowledged would be allowable. The combination of limitations recited in independent Claims 1, 9, and 19, as amended, are not disclosed, taught, or suggested in the prior art of record. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection be withdrawn.

Amendment of the claims should not be construed as acquiescence to or agreement with the Examiner's statements in the Office Action, particularly those concerning the disclosure or teaching of a reference or combination of references, the appropriateness of combining references, or the scope of or limitations recited in Applicant's claims.

New Claims 29-43 depend on Claims 1, 9, and 19 and are allowable for at least this reason. In addition, new Claims 29-43 contain further patentable distinctions over the prior art of record. New Claim 44 recites certain substantially similar limitations to those recited in Claims 1, 9, and 19 and is allowable for at least this reason. Applicant respectfully requests consideration and allowance of new Claims 29-44.

CONCLUSION

Applicant has made an earnest attempt to place this case in condition for allowance. For the foregoing reasons, and for other reasons clearly apparent, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and full allowance of all pending claims.

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would advance prosecution of this Application in any manner, the Examiner is invited to contact Christopher W. Kennerly, Attorney for Applicant, at the Examiner's convenience at (214) 953-6812.

A check for \$388.00 is included to cover the cost of 1 additional independent claim and 16 additional claims total. Although no other fees are believed due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-0384 of Baker Botts L.L.P.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark-Ups Reflecting Changes to Claims

1. (Amended) A system for performing a business process, comprising:
a first version of a business application [that is] identified using a first version identifier and executable [executed] by a first client to perform a [particular] business process, the first client being coupled to a second client using a communication link, [; and] a second version of the business application [that is] identified using a second version identifier being executable [and executed] by the [a] second client to perform the business process[, wherein the second client is coupled to the first client using a communication link and];

the first [second] version of the business application [is] operable to determine the first version identifier and the second version identifier and, if the first version is higher than the second version, to exercise control over execution of the business process [determine a selected one of the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application to initiate the business process based upon the first version identifier and the second version identifier].

2. (Amended) The system of Claim 1, wherein[:] the first [second] version of the business application comprises a version identification module operable to generate a version identification request for communication to the second [first] client, [wherein] the version identification request being [is] associated with the [particular] business process and generated according to a version identification protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application[; and], a version identification module of the second [first] version of the business application initiating communication of [comprises a version identification module operable to initiate communicating] the second [first] version identifier to the first [second] version of the business application in response to the version identification request.

3. (Amended) The system of Claim 1, wherein the first [second] version of the business application is operable, if the first version of the business application is an initiator of the business process, to control the business process if the second [first] version [of the business application] is not higher than the first [second] version [of the business application].

4. (Amended) The system of Claim 1 [3], wherein the first [second] version of the business application further comprises a business process module operable to:

generate a first business message associated with the business process for communication to the second [first] client, the first business message being generated according to the second [first] version [of the business application]; and

initiate retrieval [retrieving] from the second [first] client of a second business message generated according to the second [first] version [of the business application].

5. (Amended) The system of Claim 1 [3], wherein the first client is [version of the business application further comprises a status message module] operable to receive [generate] a status message from [for communication to] the second client indicating [to indicate] the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the second client, the status message being generated according to a status message protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application.

6. (Amended) The system of Claim 1, wherein the first version of the business application is operable to allow the second version of the business application to exercise control over execution of the business process if the second [first] version [of the business application] is higher than the first [second] version [of the business application].

7. (Amended) The system of Claim 6, wherein the first version of the business application further comprises a business process module operable to[: initiate retrieving from the second client a first business message associated with the business process, the first business message generated according to the second version of the business application; and] generate a [second] business message associated with the business process for retrieval by [communication to] the second client, the [second] business message being generated according to the first [second] version [of the business application].

8. (Amended) The system of Claim 6, wherein the first [second] version of the business application further comprises a status message module operable to generate a status message for communication to the second [first] client to indicate the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the first client, the status message being

generated according to a status message protocol supported by the **first [second]** version of the business application and the **second [first]** version of the business application.

9. (Amended) A method for performing a business process, comprising:
at a first client, determining a first version identifier associated with a first version of a business application used by **the [a]** first client to perform a business process;
at the first client, determining a second version identifier associated with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the business process;
and
[determining a selected one of the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application to initiate the business process based upon the first version identifier and the second version identifier]
at the first client, if the first version is higher than the second version, exercising control over execution of the business process.

10. (Amended) The method of Claim 9, further comprising:
generating a version identification request for communication **from [to]** the first client **to the second client;** and
receiving the **second [first]** version identifier **from the second client** in response to the version identification request.

11. (Amended) The method of Claim 10, wherein **[the step of generating comprises generating]** the version identification request **is generated** according to a version identification protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application.

12. (Amended) The method of Claim 9, further comprising, **if the first version of the business application is an initiator of the business process,** controlling the business process **at the first client [by the second version of the business application]** if the **second [first]** version **[of the business application]** is not higher than the **first [second]** version **[of the business application]**.

13. (Amended) The method of Claim 9 [12], further comprising:
generating a first business message associated with the business process for communication from [to] the first client to the second client, the first business message being generated according to the second [first] version [of the business application]; and
retrieving from the second client a second business message generated by the second [first] client according to the second [first] version [of the business application].

14. (Amended) The method of Claim 9 [12], further comprising:
at the first client, receiving a status message generated by the second [first] client according to a status message protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the second client; and
retrieving the business message from the second [first] client in response to the status message.

15. (Amended) The method of Claim 9, further comprising allowing the second version of the business application to exercise control over execution of [controlling] the business process [by the first version of the business application] if the second [first] version [of the business application] is higher than the first [second] version [of the business application].

16. (Amended) The method of Claim 15, further comprising generating at the first client[: retrieving from the second client a first] a business message associated with the business process for retrieval by the second client, the [first] business message being generated according to the second version [of the business application]; and communicating to the second client a second business message generated according to the second version of the business application].

17. (Amended) The method of Claim 15, further comprising[:] communicating [receiving] a status message from [generated by] the first [second] client to the second client according to a status message protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating

the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the first client;
and retrieving the business message from the second client in response to the status
message].

18. (Amended) The method of Claim 9, further comprising:

performing the business process according to the first version [of the business
application] if the second [first] version [of the business application] is [not] higher than
the first [second] version [of the business application]; and

performing the business process according to the second version [of the business
application] if the first version [of the business application] is higher than the second
version [of the business application].

19. (Amended) Software [A business application] for performing a business
process, the software being [application] encoded on a computer-readable medium and
when executed operable to [execute the following steps]:

at a first client, determine [determining] a first version identifier associated with a
first version of a [the] business application used by the [a] first client to perform a business
process;

at the first client, determine [determining] a second version identifier associated
with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the
business process; and

[determining a selected one of the first version of the business application and
the second version of the business application to initiate the business process based upon
the first version identifier and the second version identifier]

at the first client, if the first version is higher than the second version, exercise
control over execution of the business process.

20. (Amended) The software [business application] of Claim 19, further
operable to [comprising]:

generate [generating] a version identification request for communication from [to]
the first client to the second client; and

receive [receiving] the second [first] version identifier from the second client in
response to the version identification request.

21. (Amended) The software [business application] of Claim 20, wherein [the step of generating comprises generating] the version identification request is generated according to a version identification protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application.

22. (Amended) The software [business application] of Claim 19, further [comprising] operable to, if the first version of the business application is an initiator of the business process, control[ling] the business process at the first client [by the second version of the business application] if the second [first] version [of the business application] is not higher than the first [second] version [of the business application].

23. (Amended) The software [business application] of Claim 19 [22], further operable to [comprising]:

generate [generating] a first business message associated with the business process for communication from [to] the first client to the second client, the first business message being generated according to the second [first] version [of the business application]; and

retrieve [retrieving] from the second client a second business message generated by the second [first] client according to the second [first] version [of the business application].

24. (Amended) The software [business application] of Claim 19 [22], further operable to [comprising]:

at the first client, receive [receiving] a status message generated by the second [first] client according to a status message protocol that is supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process at the second client; and

retrieve [retrieving] the business message from the second [first] client in response to the status message.

25. (Amended) The software [business application] of Claim 19, further [comprising] operable to allow the second version of the business application to exercise control over execution of [controlling] the business process [by the first version of the

business application] if the **second** **[first]** version **[of the business application]** is higher than the **first** **[second]** version **[of the business application]**.

26. (Amended) The **software** **[business application]** of Claim 25, further **[comprising]** **operable to generate at the first client[: retrieving from the second client a first]** **a** business message associated with the business process **for retrieval by the second client,** the **[first]** business message **being** generated according to the second version **[of the business application; and communicating to the second client a second business message generated according to the second version of the business application]**.

27. (Amended) The **software** **[business application]** of Claim 25, further **[comprising:]** **operable to communicate [receiving]** a status message **from** **[generated by]** the **first** **[second]** client **to the second client** according to a status message protocol supported by the first version of the business application and the second version of the business application, the status message indicating the presence of a business message associated with the business process **at the first client[;** **and retrieving the business message from the second client in response to the status message]**.

28. (Amended) The **software** **[business application]** of Claim 19, further **operable to [comprising]:**

perform~~[ing]~~ the business process according to the first version **[of the business application]** if the **second** **[first]** version **[of the business application]** is **[not]** higher than the **first** **[second]** version **[of the business application]**; and

perform~~[ing]~~ the business process according to the second version **[of the business application]** if the first version **[of the business application]** is higher than the second version **[of the business application]**.

29. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein the first version is higher than the second version if the first version is one or more of:

more robust than the second version;

more advanced than the second version; and

capable of providing enhanced functionality or services, relative to the second version, in performing the business process.

30. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein the first version of the business application exhibits backward compatibility with the second version of the business application, the first version of the business application being capable of performing the business process according to either the first version or the second version.

31. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein the first business application of the first client can be upgraded from the first version to a higher version without negatively impacting any other clients in the system.

32. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein the first and second versions of the business application each exhibit bidirectional executability in that each can execute a business process that it did not itself initiate.

33. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein:
the first client is associated with a buyer enterprise;
the second client is associated with a seller enterprise;
the business process comprises an order purchasing business process;
the first business message comprises a purchase order; and
the second business message comprises a purchase order acknowledgement.

34. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein the first version is higher than the second version if the first version is one or more of:
more robust than the second version;
more advanced than the second version; and
capable of providing enhanced functionality or services, relative to the second version, in performing the business process.

35. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein the first version of the business application exhibits backward compatibility with the second version of the business application, the first version of the business application being capable of performing the business process according to either the first version or the second version.

36. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein the first business application of the first client can be upgraded from the first version to a higher version without negatively impacting any other clients in the system.

37. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein the first and second versions of the business application each exhibit bidirectional executability in that each can execute a business process that it did not itself initiate.

38. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein:
the first client is associated with a buyer enterprise;
the second client is associated with a seller enterprise;
the business process comprises an order purchasing business process;
the first business message comprises a purchase order; and
the second business message comprises a purchase order acknowledgement.

39. (New) The software of Claim 19, wherein the first version is higher than the second version if the first version is one or more of:
more robust than the second version;
more advanced than the second version; and
capable of providing enhanced functionality or services, relative to the second version, in performing the business process.

40. (New) The software of Claim 19, wherein the first version of the business application exhibits backward compatibility with the second version of the business application, the first version of the business application being capable of performing the business process according to either the first version or the second version.

41. (New) The software of Claim 19, wherein the first business application of the first client can be upgraded from the first version to a higher version without negatively impacting any other clients in the system.

42. (New) The software of Claim 19, wherein the first and second versions of the business application each exhibit bidirectional executability in that each can execute a business process that it did not itself initiate.

43. (New) The software of Claim 19, wherein:
the first client is associated with a buyer enterprise;
the second client is associated with a seller enterprise;
the business process comprises an order purchasing business process;
the first business message comprises a purchase order; and
the second business message comprises a purchase order acknowledgement.

44. (New) A system for performing a business process, comprising:
means for, at a first client, determining a first version identifier associated with a first version of a business application used by the first client to perform a business process;
means for, at the first client, determining a second version identifier associated with a second version of the business application used by a second client to perform the business process; and
means for, at the first client, if the first version is higher than the second version, exercising control over execution of the business process.